



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center, located at 800 E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28202 on Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 6 p.m.

## **PRC MINUTES September 12, 2017**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **PRC Present:**

Elaine Powell, Chair  
 Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary  
 Sterling Martin  
 Brian Cox  
 Heidi Pruess  
 Rick Winiker  
 Peter Engels  
 Marc Seelinger  
 Kendel Bryant  
 John Leonard

#### **PRC Absent:**

Northern Towns – Vacant Position  
 Doug Burnett \*\*  
 Mary Foxx Johnson \*\*

(\*\*absence related to hurricane Irma)

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Powell welcomed all to the September 12, 2017 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Matt Jakubowski, facility manager, was recognized and introductions were made of the Aquatic Center Staff. A tour of the newly renovated facility followed.

Upon return from the tour, each commissioner introduced themselves and the park region they represent. They also shared where they attended elementary school and their memories of parks.

#### **Public Appearance:**

**Greenways for Mecklenburg – Ed Barnhart**

Ed Barnhart, President of Greenways for Mecklenburg (G4M), appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission to share information on the purpose of the organization. G4M is a nonprofit with a goal of seeing the greenway system in Mecklenburg County completed on an expedited realistic timeline. The County currently has 42 miles of existing greenway, 21 under construction or in design and 30 miles funded in the FY19-23 CIP. G4M would like to see 150 miles by 2030 and the entire 200-mile system by 2035. Mr. Barnhart said the following must be done to help meet this goal:

- 20-25 miles always in design or construction
- CIP funding for greenways scheduled in the early years of the funding cycle
- Adequate staff
- Use contractors to build longer contiguous sections
- Partner with the City on additional Cross Charlotte Trails
- Identify and find solutions to road blocks to the G4M goal
- Constantly track progress

**Proclamations, Awards and Recognitions** - None

### **Staff Presentations:**

#### **Livable Meck FY18 Plans – Rebecca Herbert, Community Engagement and Strategy Manager**

Rebecca Herbert shared a presentation on Livable Meck FY 18 Plans. Livable Meck was established to foster collaboration and reduce redundancies with a unified vision and plan among the eight governmental jurisdictions of Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte and the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville. Livable Meck's shared vision has 7 guiding principles: Welcoming, Innovative, Connected, Inclusive, Prepared, Healthy and Resilient. Rebecca's presentation included an update on the progress since January 2017, explained the governance and the path going forward. This presentation can be viewed here: [Livable Meck Partners Report](#)

All were invited to go to [livablemeck.com](http://livablemeck.com) to be included in the subscription service for notifications regarding engagement cafes and other opportunities. Director Garges pointed out that Park and Recreation is involved in almost all the Livable Meck guiding principles.

#### **Deferred Maintenance Update – Peter Cook, Division Director of Park Operations**

Peter Cook shared a presentation on the Department's deferred maintenance program. Based on a community survey, the public's top priority for improving the park system is to fix up what we have. Peter's presentation shared the Department's process for prioritizing/scheduling projects for renovations and replacements, the summary of FY2017 deferred maintenance, FY 18 – 21 deferred maintenance funding buckets and the strategic/routine maintenance funding for FY2022 and beyond. With dedicated funding for deferred maintenance and additional funding incorporated into capital projects for deferred maintenance, the Department has brought deferred maintenance of \$89 million in 2008 to approximately \$18 million. With continued funding of \$4.5 annually through 2021, deferred maintenance should be completed by 2021. Funding going forward will be \$3.5 million annually for "capital preservation". As the park system grows, funding for capital preservation may need to be increased. This will be assessed and addressed annually. This presentation can be viewed here: [Park & Recreation Deferred Maintenance Update](#)

## **Safety and Security – Opportunities and Partnership with CMPD – Peter Cook, Division Director of Park Operations**

Peter Cook provided an update on our park and greenway safety initiatives and partnership with CMPD. The following information was shared:

- Working together with CMPD on a greenway unit for current and future greenways
- Knight Stalker – Rangers that patrol the urban greenways and parks from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. to address the homeless
- Dedicated all weather UTV that patrols the urban greenways and parks day and night
- CMPD on and off duty officers patrolling the large greenways from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on week days and early a.m. on the weekends. Park Rangers supplement on bikes and UTVs
- Heavy CMPD presence at McAlpine Park. CMPD UTVs housed in the maintenance compound for daily patrols.
- Plans to increase camera program

Discussion followed:

- As older facilities are renovated, they will be more open and inviting with more windows.
- CMPD works with the Department to review the environment around our facilities to keep it more open and visible.
- The previous and current CMPD Chiefs look at park property like residential neighborhoods.
- The Department works with both CMPD and the town's police departments.

## **Park and Recreation Commission Priorities**

### **Adequate Funding:**

Director Garges reported on the following:

**Independence Park:** The Department has \$100,000 in the FY18 budget to begin the planning for the capital improvements to Independence Park. Independence Park is the oldest park in the system and the capital improvements will focus on the historic renovation of the landscape and Hawthorne Recreation Center.

**Memorial Stadium:** The City declined ownership of Memorial Stadium, however the Economic Development Committee continues to look for a MLS site and Memorial Stadium is not off the table. With MLS in the hands of the city, the Department must continue to focus on advocating for the renovation of Memorial Stadium, with or without MLS.

**Capital Reserve Funds:** In the past, the Department had several Capital Reserve Accounts funded by a portion of fees and charges and used for needed improvements or asset replacements. The County did away with all these Capital Reserve Accounts except for golf, turf and natural areas. Going forward the department will be receiving funding in the operating budget for capital equipment replacement.

**Revised CIP Cash Flow:** The new FY19 -23 CIP Cash Flow, to include the remaining 2008 park bond projects, has not yet been determined. This information will be provided to the PRC when complete. Director Garges stressed that the Department is advocating to push as many projects up into that 5-year cycle as possible so more of them can be completed or under construction by 2023. Most important are the greenway projects for the planning, design and permitting to start

early in the cycle so that when the construction money comes available, the project is ready to go out for bid. Director Garges assured the PRC that the Department has the people, the contractors and the ability to do the FY19 – 23 projects right. It will be important for the PRC to advocate for getting as many projects as possible started early in the cycle. Additionally, the Department continues to use the \$6.6 million annual funding for land acquisitions.

Chair Powell reiterated the importance of continuing to talk about the importance of land acquisition, especially considering a projected additional million residents in Mecklenburg County by 2030.

### **Land Preservation:**

Runoff, Spills and Erosion: Recent events and observations spurred an interest in runoff, spills and erosion. Commissioner Pruess encouraged a meeting to discuss these topics with the purpose of determining a topic to bring before the PRC on a future agenda. The meeting took place on September 6 and included Park and Recreation staff, the PRC Executive Team, staff from LUESA, City and County Storm Water staff and Water Quality staff. Commissioner Pruess shared that the meeting was very educational and that the Executive Team would meet to decide on an agenda topic to share with the full board.

Considering this topic, Commissioner Martin raised a concern regarding the approval process for development projects due to a recent, disturbing observation. Property along the Randy Kincaid Greenway in Davidson was sold for development and was clear cut, leaving very little buffer along the greenway. Recent rains caused a deluge of several inches of mud onto the greenway. While the Developer has been cooperative in clean-up and efforts to stabilize, the question still remains on how to prevent these sorts of events that impact park land.

Chair Powell felt the topic of runoff, spills and erosion was important to discuss so that the PRC can become a voice for the protection of park and greenway properties in partnership with City and County and the towns.

Director Garges shared that the Department and neighbors should be notified of any development next to a greenway or park so folk have the opportunity to review the plans and bring up concerns that may prevent events such as that along the Randy Kincaid Greenway.

### **Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments:**

**Athletics:** Motion was made by Commissioner Martin to increase the membership number on the Athletic Advisory Council from 13 to 15 and appoint **David Hale, Travis Williams, Brett Rumble and Julia Martin** to unexpired terms on the Athletic Advisory Council, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Winiker and approved unanimously.

**Golf:** Motion was made by Commissioner Cox to appoint **Alfreda Reynolds** to an unexpired term on the Golf Advisory Council, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

**North:** Motion was made by Commissioner Kendel Bryant Phillips to appoint **Doug Welsh** to an unexpired term on the North Advisory Council, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously.

## **Director's Report**

Director's Work Plan, Key Initiative #2 – Historical, Cultural and Natural Resources: Chris Matthews, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources and Deputy Director Michael Kirschman shared the following information:

The Director's Work Plan focuses on new initiatives above and beyond those in which the Department is already engaged. This initiative is part of the Director's Work Plan because it is a CAPRA standard. As a CAPRA accredited Department, one of the standards is Historical, Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan. While the Department has fully met the intent of the standard for Natural Resources Management, there is room for improvement for Historical and Cultural management. To meet this standard fully and in preparation for the 2019 re-accreditation the Department has been working on a Historical and Cultural Management Plan. The plan includes:

- Identification of Historical/Cultural Properties
- Working closely with staff, the Historic Landmarks Commission and Dr. Aaron Shapiro of the Department of History at UNCC
- Inventories
- Develop projects for future management and maintenance of each property

In addition, the Department is also working on a revised Natural Resources Management Plan for the 2019 re-accreditation.

Chair Elaine Powell inquired if there was a CAPARA standard directed towards employee satisfaction. Michael Kirschman responded there was not, but that this was addressed in the annual Employee Climate Survey which ask if the employee feels that executive leadership values employees and if they feel the BOCC values employees. The most recent survey indicated that Park and Recreation employees responded to these two questions 93% and 88% respectively. CAPRA standards do include having these types of surveys.

Marshall Park Update: Director Garges said there was no update at this time, but is one to watch.

Pearle Street Park Update: Director Garges and Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning reported the following: The land swap with Pappas Properties is complete. Still waiting for the Charlotte Housing Authority to receive Federal approval for the land swaps before actual construction on the park can begin. City Storm Water is asking to put underground storm water vaults between the right-of-way and the border of Pearle Street Park along Kennilworth Ave. The Department is working with the Diocese and the Thompson group to see if this will be acceptable under the terms of the agreement.

Land Acquisition Update: Director Garges reported that the Department is on schedule with land acquisition and with the funding available. The Department is currently working on the acquisition of two significant pieces of property, one of which will require the assistance of the Conservation Fund, as well as several smaller properties.

Queens/Marion Diehl Tennis Update: Construction is underway on the Tennis Center at Marion Diehl Park. Funding for this project includes \$3.8 million from the County and \$1.5 million from Queens University. The Center will include locker rooms, space for coaches, offices, a program office and will be connected by a bridge to an enclosed pavilion, similar to Mahlon Adams.

Construction should be completed by May of 2018 and will include a new entrance and traffic light from Tyvola Rd.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Gym Renovation: This \$2.5 million-dollar project is 60% complete. Members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alumni Association were invited to attend the presentation of two murals, by local artist Tommie Robinson, to the Arts and Science Council. Feedback from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alumni brought about a positive redesign in the murals to not only reflect athletics, but to also reflect education, fraternities and sororities, community and other skill sets reflective of Brooklyn Village. These murals will be in the newly renovated 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Gym. The Gym will house historical artifacts and also be programmed by the Aquatic Center for fitness.

### **PRC Chair Report:**

Responsibilities and Communication: Chair Powell reminded the PRC Board of their responsibility to:

- Attend all PRC meetings, assigned regional and specialty advisory council meetings and to communicate with someone on the Executive Team or advisory council chair if you are going to miss a meeting.
- Be mindful of the Park and Recreation Commission as a body when expressing opinions or offering information and to know and reference votes by the PRC.

Monthly Agenda: Send monthly agenda items to the Executive Team well in advance of the PRC meeting. PRC were reminded by staff to share from whom the agenda item is coming, in case staff have questions, and the context around the request so that staff can correctly address the topic. Also, Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman encouraged PRC to seek staff out one-on-one for information on any topic in which they may be interested.

Commissioner Kendel Bryant Phillips: Kendel's last official PRC meeting. She will come back to the January 2018 PRC meeting to be officially recognized for her service. Kendel said serving on the PRC was an absolute pleasure and she would continue to be involved and serve on the North Park Region Advisory Council.

### **Consent Items**

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of August 8, 2017, which was seconded by Commissioner Winiker and approved unanimously.

### **PRC Reports and Requests**

Commissioner Martin: The North Advisory Council had a park tour on 9/9/17 led by Chris Hunter, North Region Manager. The tour included the new pavilion at Jetton Park.

Commissioner Phillips: Expressed her pleasure at being a part of the Park and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner McMannis: Shared that he was taking pictures at Romare Bearden and was approached and asked to photograph a marriage proposal. Deputy Director Michael Kirschman offered to post the picture on the P&R Facebook Page.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.